

# **FACTS ABOUT SENATOR WEBB'S GI BILL, POST-9/11 VETERANS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2007 (S.22)**

January 2008

## **SUMMARY**

The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2007, S.22, is designed to expand the educational benefits that our nation offers to the brave men and women who have served us so honorably since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The bill would mirror the educational benefits provided to veterans returning from World War II. A House companion bill, H.R. 2702, was introduced by Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA).

## **BACKGROUND**

Our country has a tradition – since World War II – of offering educational assistance to returning veterans. In the 1940s, the first “GI Bill” helped transform notions of equality in American society. The World War II GI bill paid for veterans’ tuition, books, fees, a monthly stipend, and other training costs. Approximately 7.8 million veterans used the benefits given under the original GI bill in some form, out of a wartime veteran population of 15 million. For every dollar invested in veterans, seven dollars were generated.

Over the last several decades, Congress passed a number of other GI bills that also gave educational benefits to veterans. However, benefits awarded under those subsequent bills have not been as expansive as our nation’s original GI bill. Currently, veterans’ educational benefits are administered under the Montgomery GI Bill. This program is designed for peacetime – not wartime – service.

## **MAJOR PROVISIONS**

- Increased educational benefits would be available to members of the military who have served on active duty since September 11, 2001. To qualify, veterans must have served at least two years of active duty, with at least some period of active duty time served beginning on or after September 11, 2001.
- The bill provides for educational benefits to be paid for a duration of time linked to time served in the military. Generally, veterans would not receive assistance for more than a total of 36 months, which equals four academic years.
- Benefits provided under the bill would allow veterans pursuing an approved program of education to receive payments covering the established charges of their program, and a monthly stipend of \$1,000. The bill would allow additional payments for tutorial assistance, as well as licensure and certification tests. Benefit payments would be limited to the costs of the most expensive public institution in the state in which the veteran is enrolled.
- Veterans would have up to fifteen years, compared to ten years under the Montgomery GI bill, to use their educational assistance entitlement. Veterans would be barred from receiving concurrent assistance from this program and another similar program.

## CO-SPONSORS, SUPPORTERS

The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2007, S.22, has 32 cosponsors in the Senate, including lead Republican co-sponsor Chuck Hagel (NE). The House companion bill, H.R. 2702, introduced by Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA), has 91 cosponsors in the House. (*As of January 31, 2007*)

The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2007 has been endorsed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), the Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA), the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS), the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), and the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC).

## KEY POINTS MADE BY SENATOR WEBB

- **Currently, veterans' educational benefits are administered under the Montgomery GI Bill—a program designed primarily for peacetime – not wartime – service.** The demands placed on soldiers and sailors in this post 9/11 era are much greater than when Congress established the current program. With many of our military members serving two, three or four tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is past time to enact a new veterans' education program modeled on the World War II era GI bill.
- **The GI Bill of the World War II era sparked economic growth and expansion for a whole generation of Americans; a more robust GI bill holds the same potential for today's economy.** The United States has never erred when it has made sustained new investments in higher education and job training – and its veterans. Educated veterans have higher income levels, which in the long run increases tax revenues. Approximately 7.8 million veterans used the benefits in some form, out of a wartime veteran population of 15 million. For every dollar invested in WWII veterans, seven dollars were generated.
- **A strong and reliable GI bill will have a positive effect on military recruitment.**
- Better educated veterans have a **more positive readjustment experience** and lower levels of post-traumatic stress disorder.
- **The education of our nation's veterans is a cost of war.** A very small percentage of Americans have stepped forward to serve our country through military service; they have earned the right to have a bright future when they have completed their service. A GI bill that properly rewards honorable service is the right thing to do.
- **The estimated \$2 billion a year needed for the program equals one week of war in Iraq.**
- Three former Presidents, a dozen U.S. Senators, three Supreme Court Justices and fourteen Nobel Prize winners went to school on the GI Bill. Under today's Montgomery GI Bill, these same leaders would receive only a fraction of the money necessary to get the same level of education.